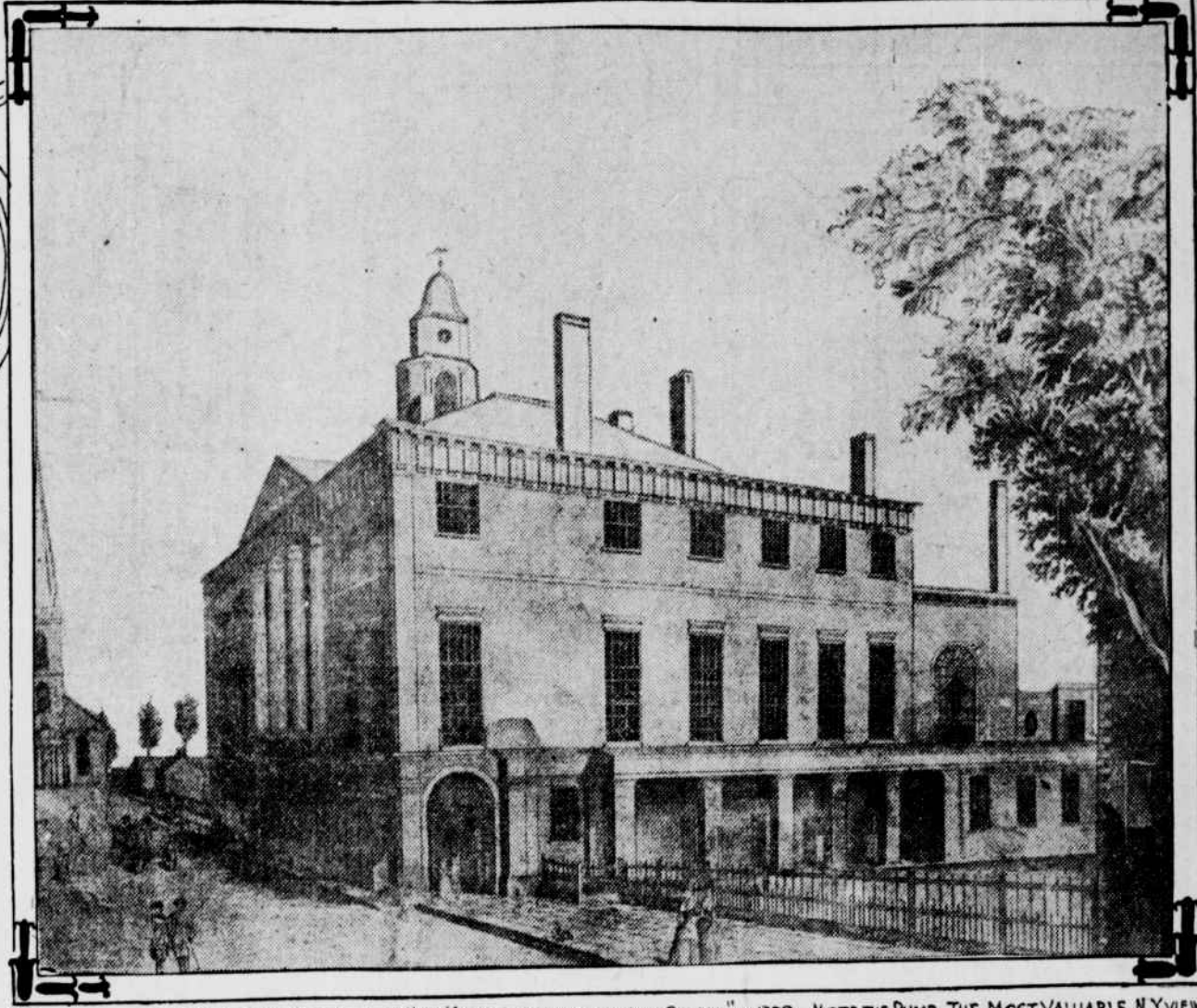


"NEW YORK FROM LONG ISLAND" THE WOOD-ROLLINSON ENGRAVING. A COPY SOLD THREE YEARS AGO FOR \$1280, and WOULD TODAY BRING \$2,000



A PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE CITY HALL IN NEW YORK "TAKEN FROM WALL STREET," IN 1789. NOTE THE PUMP, THE MOST VALUABLE N.Y. VIEW REPRESENTING A SINGLE STRUCTURE OR STREET SCENE.

# The Romance of Olden Time Prints of NEW-YORK CITY.

Goodly Niches in Important Collections Are  
Now Filled with Prints of Former  
Times in Manhattan, and Engravings  
Once Almost Scorned Are  
Eagerly Sought.

A RECENT romantic discovery in so unlikely a place as the Far West has aroused considerable interest. The thing discovered is that rarest and most valuable engraving, the so-called Burgis View of New York, reputed to have been sold in this city for \$20,000.

William Burgis was a publisher whose earliest work, so far as known, bears the date 1777, which appears on "A South Prospect of the Flourishing City of New York."

It is known that he engraved in mezzotint from his signature on the view of the "Lighthouse at the Entrance to Boston Harbour," as well as a "Plan of Boston" in 1779, although all other known examples of his work are in line. The first issue of the "New York" is dedicated "To His Excellency Robert Hunter, Esq., Captain General and Governor in Chief of the Provinces of New York," etc.

Until the recent discovery of the wonderfully fine and perfect copy in the four original divisions the print was known only by an imperfect copy from which the greater part of the description at the bottom was missing and without the name of the engraver. This was presented to the New York Historical Society by Mrs. Maria Peebles in 1888.

The original represents to-day the most valuable single item in the New York Historical Society's building. The society does possess, however, a very good copy of the second issue, published by Thomas Rakewell in 1786, in which the arms and name of Governor George Clinton replace those of Governor Hunter.

even he was startled by the magnitude of the sum demanded, and it was only after treating with the representatives of the owners at many midnight and early morning sessions that he purchased it outright at a slight discount from the original figure.

The print was bought from Mr. Fridenberg this summer by a New York collector, one of the younger set who, in spite of the fact that his interest in New York views was aroused only a few years ago, has shown so much intelligence and discrimination that to-day he has, in Mr. Fridenberg's opinion, without question the finest collection of New York views known.

It is at this man's emphatic request that Mr. Fridenberg refuses to make his name public, as it is well known that collectors generally are the targets for a bombardment of rubbish from all sides by people who imagine that every woodcut which represents a New York view



Burgis View of New York, Discovered in the  
Far West, Sells for \$20,000—Value of One  
Engraving Multiplied by Twenty in a  
Decade, That of Another by  
Thirty in 15 Years.

round sum of \$100,000. The total results of the sale were \$102,300.

To the uninitiated this would seem a remarkable performance, but as a matter of fact it is a very common occurrence for dealers who specialize to guarantee an appraisal within 10 per cent of what the merchandise will fetch at a special sale.

The New York collector has more local patriotism and real interest in the history of his native town than the inhabitant of any other city in the world. The Philadelphian, whose history and whose monuments more frequently remind him of the part played in the development of the country, lacks the strong feeling and the appreciation of values that the New York collector displays. The Bostonian is overcautious in buying local views.

It is doubtful whether the rarest view of Paris, London, Berlin or any other large foreign city would bring a twentieth part of the recent New York record.

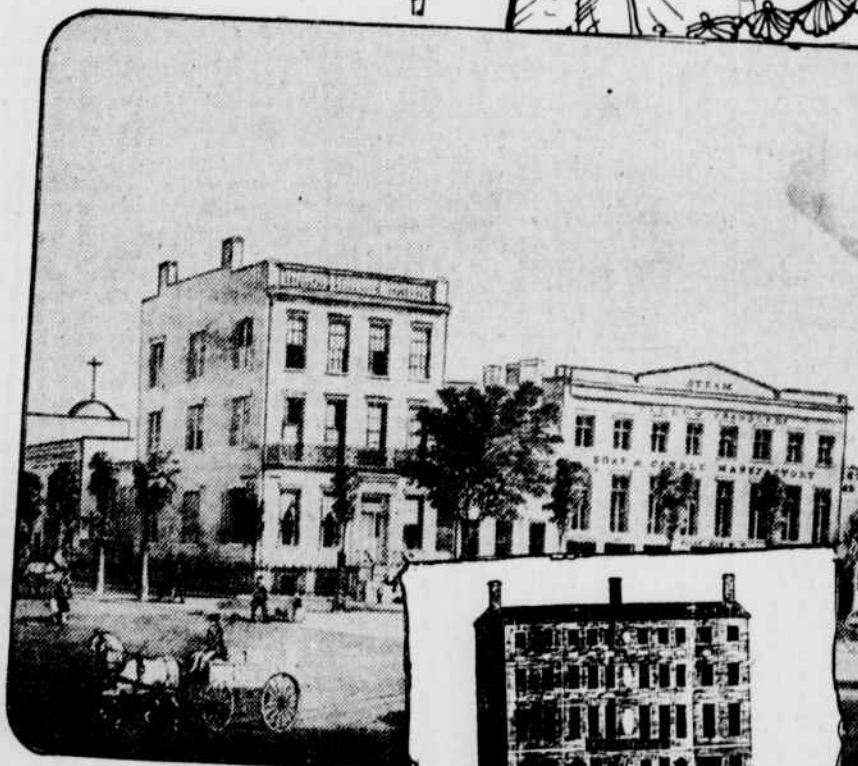
through the courtesy of Dr. Robert H. Kelby, librarian of the New York Historical Society.

Undoubtedly the most important and valuable single item in Mr. Cruikshank's collection is the old view of Barnum's American Museum, which stood on the southeast corner of Broadway and Ann street, the site afterward occupied by the "Herald." It was advertised by Mr. Barnum as being "the largest, most valuable and best arranged."

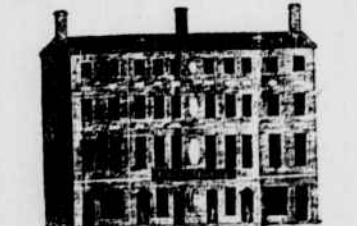
Barnum evidently appreciated the value of advertising long before his American Museum was instituted. There is a very entertaining "Account of the Celebration at Danbury, Conn., Dec. 5, 1832, on the Emancipation from Prison of Freedom, where he had been confined sixty days for an alleged libel on Mr. Seth Seelye." This is in the form of a large printed broadside. An impression of this rare item was sold on last Wednesday.

The curious "New York from Long Island," Wood-Rollinson engraving, published in 1801, is one of the five perfect copies known, of which the finest and most brilliant was in the Holden collection. That copy sold for \$1,280 and would probably to-day bring more than \$2,000.

This is a most beautiful and decorative print and a great favorite with collectors for its artistic qualities as well as its rarity. Holden also had a fine early wash-drawing copy of this which is now in the New York Historical Society.



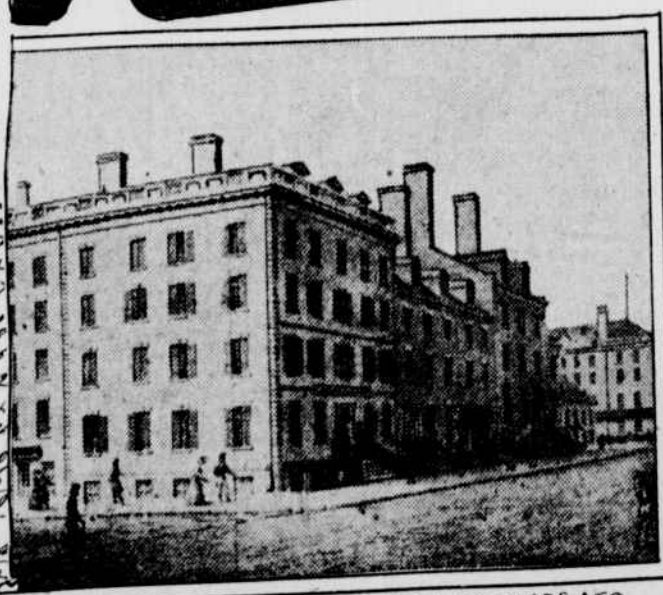
IN 1860 FIRST AND SECOND AVENUES AS FAR NORTH AS THE PRESENT STUYVESANT PARK, CONTAINED THE HOMES OF THE MOST FASHIONABLE INHABITANTS.



CITY HOTEL, BROADWAY, NEW-YORK, July 29th 1807



THIS PARTICULAR IMPRESSION OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE WAS THE HOLDEN EXAMPLE WHICH WAS PURCHASED FOR \$1050. MR. HOLDEN BOUGHT IT 1898 FOR \$50.



AMERICAN HOTEL, AS IT APPEARED 80 YEARS AGO, ON THE SITE OF THE WOOLWORTH BUILDING

DOCUMENTARY PROOF OF THE LOW COST OF LIVING ON BROADWAY IN 1807. TEN DAYS ENTERTAINMENT FOR TWO INCLUDING LIQUORS AND TOBACCO \$24.10

In the spring of 1910 there was sold at the American Art Association the collection of Edwin Babcock Holden. It was necessary for insurance purposes to appraise some 8,000 lots. The catalogue, after a careful scrutiny of the items, decided that they were worth \$75,000, and for convenience they were insured at the

New York receives constantly knocks and digs, especially from the foreigner, for its commercialism, but gradually the treasures of art and literature gravitate in this direction. The taste and intellectual qualities that stimulate the various forms of collecting make at least a good use of the wealth for which we are supposed to show an unreasonable avidity.

At bottom the prejudice against our alleged commercialism is one of envy. The longest pole gets the most persimmons, but the man who handles the pole shows a taste for the fruit. The other fellow takes the same view of persimmons that the fox did of the grapes.

Besides the unusually fine collection of New York views owned by the New York Historical Society itself, there is at present an additional incentive to a visit in the opportunity to see the Edwin A. Cruikshank collection, just placed on exhibition there.

The society's building is open to the public each week day from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m., and on holidays from 1 p. m. to 5 p. m. The reproductions published in The Tribune to-day have been made

ROLLINSON'S "CUSTOM HOUSE."

Another fine example by William Rollinson is his "Custom House, New York," with his original drawing from which it was engraved. The print is the first state of the plate and the only known copy, although there are three copies known of the second name.

This particular impression was the Holden example which was purchased for \$1,000. Mr. Holden bought it in 1888 from a New York dealer for \$50, a fair example of the increase in value of unusually fine and rare items which is out of all proportion to the general increase of value of New Yorks. In this instance it was the beauty, the decorative quality and the local interest in the subject that performed the trick.

The Custom House of that period, about one hundred years ago, was in the old Government House, south of the Bowling Green, on the site of what is still recalled by old New Yorkers as Steamship Row.

It is curious that after one hundred years the government should again have selected this identical spot for the Custom House. The print represents the simple conditions of the time, with the quaint costumes and droff street incidents exactly as they appeared to the artist.

A curious lithograph was published by E. F. Butler, of No. 90 Fulton street, showing the "Great Riot at the Astor Place Opera House, New York." It represents the dense multitude of spectators when the military fired and gives a list of about seventy persons killed and wounded. This is the only copy known of this representation, although the subject was also illustrated by a better known lithographer, Nathaniel Currier.

ENDICOTT'S LITHOGRAPH.

The representation of Allan Hay & Co.'s soap and candle works, at Nos. 23, 41 and 43 First avenue, is a colored lithograph by Endicott, one of the most artistic and capable of the lithographers of that period. It is of great interest as showing the marked changes in the architecture and street scenes. The beautiful mansion at the corner can only have been the residence of a prominent and wealthy citizen of the period, about 1850.

At that time First and Second avenues, as far north as the present Stuyvesant Park, contained the residences of the